

# ALL WORK ZONES HAVE RULES

NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK APRIL 11-15

## FACT SHEET

### Georgia DOT and Work Zone Safety

- Since 1973, 58 Georgia DOT employees have died in work zone incidents.
- In 2014, while GDOT had no employee work zone fatalities, there were 20 total work zone fatalities, including a GDOT contractor. In 2015, there were 27 work zone fatalities in Georgia – all members of the public.
- Statewide work zone motor vehicle fatality totals in previous years: 17 in 2013; 31 in 2012; and 21 in 2011.
- In 2011, a Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO), died while assisting a stranded motorist. In March 2016 a second HERO died from injuries sustained from being hit while helping a motorist in August 2015.

### Background

- **National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW)** is an annual spring campaign sponsored by federal, state and local transportation officials to raise the public consciousness about the need for driving safely in work zones. The campaign draws attention to the safety needs of road workers, as well as motorists. NWZAW is held at the start of the highway construction season across most of the country.
- National Work Zone Awareness Week began in 1999 and is designed to inform motorists of the dangers they face while driving through work zones and consequently, of the perils faced by construction and maintenance workers in those areas. Since 1999 national work zone fatalities have decreased by 23 percent.
- Since 1973, 58 GDOT workers have lost their lives in work zones. However, motorists or their passengers are more likely to be killed or injured in work zone crashes than GDOT workers.
- According to the Federal Highway Administration, nationally in 2014 (the most recent year for which data are available):
  - Driver and vehicle passengers accounted for 82 percent of work zone fatalities
  - 669 work zone traffic-related fatalities occurred (up 13 percent from 2013), with 46 crashes involving multiple fatalities;
  - 31,251 work zone injuries occurred (a 9 percent increase from 2013);
  - 116 worker fatalities occurred (a 9 percent increase from 2013); and
  - 246 large trucks and buses (235 large trucks, 11 buses) were involved in fatal crashes in work zones (a 27 percent increase from 2013).
- **Don't Be THAT Driver**, the 2016 national theme for work zone awareness week cautions motorists to not drive distracted - to work on safety; to get home safely, every day.

## 10 Tips for Driving in Work Zones

- **Obey the rules of Work Zone:** (1) Pay attention (2) Slow down (3) Watch for workers
- **Expect the Unexpected.** Things may change overnight. Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be closed, narrowed, or shifted, and people may be working on or near the road.
- **Don't Speed.** Obey the posted speed limit, even when workers are not present. Speeding was involved in more than one-third (36%) of the fatal crashes that occurred in construction/maintenance zones in 2011.
- **Don't Tailgate.** Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you and the construction workers and their equipment. Rear-end collisions account for 30% of work zone crashes.
- **Obey Road Crew Flaggers and Pay Attention to Signs.** Failure to obey speed limit signs or a flagger's traffic control directions can result in hefty fines and/or imprisonment.
- **Stay Alert and Minimize Distractions.** Give your full attention to the roadway and avoid changing radio stations or using cell phones and other electronic devices while approaching and driving in a work zone.
- **Keep Up with the Traffic Flow.** Do not slow down to gawk at road work.
- **Know Before You Go.** Expect delays, leave early and schedule enough time to drive safely. For 24/7 real-time traffic information call 511 or visit [www.511ga.org](http://www.511ga.org) (do not do this when driving!). And follow Georgia DOT on Twitter for additional updates.
- **Be Patient and Stay Calm.** Work zone crews are working to improve the road and make your future drive better.
- **Wear Your Seatbelt.** It is your best defense in a crash. And make sure your passengers are buckled up.
- **Remember** - Dads, Moms, Sons, Daughters, Brothers, and Sisters Work HERE!

## Work Zone Safety and Georgia Driving Laws

- **Distracted driving** is a key cause of many crashes, and this especially applies in work zones. In addition to DUI and Impaired Driving laws, related Georgia driving laws include:
  - **Cell phone** use is prohibited for drivers younger than 18 and school bus drivers (including hand-held and hands-free)
  - **Texting** is banned for all drivers
- Georgia's cell phone and texting laws: <http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/highway-safety/texting-laws/>
- **Georgia's Move-Over Law** requires drivers - when encountering a stationary emergency vehicle flashing emergency lights - to change lanes or slow down and be prepared to stop. This applies to Georgia DOT work zones, as well as law enforcement, first responders, tow operators and HERO operators. The Move-Over fine in Georgia is up to \$500.
- Georgia's Move-Over Law: <http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/highway-safety/move-over-law/>
- To view and share GDOT's 30-second work zone safety video and for additional information, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/Workzone](http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/Workzone).